United Nations A/55/PV.111

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

111th plenary meeting
Friday, 7 September 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 122 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/55/1031)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/55/1031, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that 15 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/55/1031?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Seventh report of the General Committee (A/55/250/Add.6)

Draft decision (A/55/L.94)

Request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 33 (A/55/L.95)

The President: I should like to draw the attention of representatives to the seventh report of the General Committee (A/55/250/Add.6) concerning a request by a number of Member States for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item.

In the report, the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "Observer status for Partners in Population and Development in the General Assembly", should be included in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include that additional item in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: I should now like to draw the attention of the Assembly to a draft decision issued as document A/55/L.94 and entitled "Meaning of the terms 'takes note of' and 'notes'".

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/55/L.94.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/55/L.94?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: As indicated in the footnote to document A/55/L.95, in order for the General Assembly to take action on the draft resolution, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 33, entitled "Culture of peace".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolution (A/55/L.95)

The President: Members will recall that, at its 9th plenary meeting on 11 September 2000, the General Assembly decided to consider agenda item 33 directly in plenary meeting.

In order for the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the draft resolution, may I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.95.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom warmly welcomes this opportunity to introduce the draft resolution before the General Assembly in document A/55/L.95. As this is a joint initiative sponsored with Costa Rica, Ambassador Chassoul will shortly also say a few words by way of introduction. We believe, and I hope that the Assembly will not wholly disagree, that Costa Rica and the United Kingdom together present a passable combination of vision and practicality.

I am also delighted to announce that the following Member States have now added their names to the list of sponsors of this draft resolution: Bangladesh, Belarus, Gambia, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Paraguay and San Marino.

The United Nations International Day of Peace was originally established by General Assembly resolution 36/67 as a result of the initiative of Costa Rica. It was set to occur on the third Tuesday in September each year, to coincide with the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly. The United Kingdom and Costa Rican Governments have now joined together to strengthen and reinvigorate what we believe is the unique and still largely unfulfilled opportunity for the practical furtherance of peace.

The need for such an enhanced approach was originally brought to our attention by a United Kingdom-based non-governmental organization, Peace One Day, which, over the past two years, has gained far-reaching support for its campaign from senior political leaders in every continent. What we are collectively hoping to achieve is to take the International Day of Peace beyond its essential symbolism, an aim that is itself symbolic of the programmatic targets that the United Nations has set itself for the new millennium.

We believe that the meaning and impact of the International Day of Peace should be strengthened to allow the global community as a whole to understand and honour the Day in a fuller, more practical and more significant way. Accordingly, this draft resolution recommends that henceforth the United Nations International Day of Peace be observed as a global ceasefire day, the foundation for a wide-scale and, I hope, unanimous cessation of violent conflict throughout the world for the duration of the Day.

It further recommends that the United Nations International Day of Peace become a fixed date in the calendar, to avoid the confusion that has arisen in recent years as to when the Day falls, to allow for better planning and publicity and, thus, to encourage broader observance throughout the world. Most important, however — because most useful to those in need — it will create a clear and unequivocal window for medical, humanitarian and developmental agencies, both non-governmental and governmental, to provide vital services in comparative safety to civilian victims in areas of conflict. The draft resolution suggests that the Day be fixed as 21 September, reflecting the first-ever United Nations International Day of Peace — which was 21 September 1981 — as well as symbolizing the twenty-first century.

Costa Rica and the United Kingdom jointly commend this draft resolution to our fellow Member States as a step both symbolic and concrete towards our collective ambition to make peace a reality throughout the world 365 days a year.

Mrs. Chassoul (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, first of all, to thank Ambassador Greenstock for the excellent introduction of the draft resolution he has just made. I would also like to thank him for the leadership of his delegation in promoting this initiative.

From the beginning of written history, humankind has lived under the shadow of war, destruction and death. Hate and violence reign in the hearts of men. Nations take up arms against one another, and peoples drown in rivers of blood. How many lives have been lost? How many dreams, hopes and expectations have been wasted? How much sadness has been created?

War, disease, hunger and death are the four horsemen of the apocalypse. Today they continue to threaten human progress. Humankind should grab the reins of its destiny with a firm hand and chart a path towards a better future. This Organization is the beacon that can illuminate that path.

Humankind is at long last living in circumstances that are propitious to both embracing peace and definitively rejecting war. The shadows cast by the cold war and the arms race have vanished. The veil of ideological confrontation has been lifted, and there is a daily growing awareness of the barbarity of violence, poverty and injustice. Today we have before us a fertile field in which to sow the seeds of peace so that the excesses of destruction and conflict may be replaced by the values of brotherhood, tolerance and cooperation among all people.

Peace is not created in a day. The promotion of peace requires a continuous effort to create an environment where there is mutual respect and where violence is shunned. Real sustainable peace can be attained only when the conditions of a worthy life are guaranteed for all; when there is a level of economic development that provides for the basic needs of all; when basic human rights are respected; and when social and political differences are resolved through democratic means, dialogue and negotiation. Building a true culture of peace requires that efforts be made in every field. Respect for and promotion of human dignity and the search for the common well-being are essential prerequisites for peace.

Peace is not created in a single day. Nevertheless, it is both just and essential that we devote a special day every year to commemorate and strengthen the ideal of peace among all nations.

Exactly 20 years ago, in 1981, Costa Rica worked towards the adoption by the General Assembly of an annual observance of the International Day of Peace. It did so precisely to commemorate and advance these lofty ideals. That initiative was the idea of the President of Costa Rica at the time, Mr. Rodrigo Carazo Odio, a firm believer in the fact that peace can only be built through education, training and example. It was that very commitment that later led President Carazo to establish the University for Peace, an institution of higher education designed to provide training in academic fields that promote peaceful relations between people and nations.

My delegation fully supports the draft resolution introduced on behalf of the sponsors by the representative of the United Kingdom. It provides for setting a fixed date for the commemoration of the day of peace. This will help the preparations for the celebrations and commemoration and at the same time enable all peoples to respect a truce that day. The sponsors are convinced that these measures will make it possible at a later stage for people to recognize the value of peace even more. That will be the first stage towards a solution to existing conflicts.

We hope that this draft resolution will be adopted with the firm support of all the Member States.

The President: I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, France, Georgia, Greece, Kuwait and Liechtenstein have become sponsors of A/55/L.95.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.95, entitled "International Day of Peace." May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 55/282).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 181 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Draft resolution (A/55/L.92)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.92.

Mr. van den Berg (Netherlands): My delegation has the pleasure to introduce the draft resolution regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as contained in document A/55/L.92. By this procedural resolution the General Assembly will approve the Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Moreover, cooperation between the two organizations will be included in the agenda of future General Assembly sessions.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all those countries that have co-sponsored this important resolution, which will facilitate the process of cooperation that started in the General Assembly in May 1997. In addition to those listed in document A/55/L.92, I should like to include the following countries that have expressed their wish to be added to the group of sponsors: Georgia, India, Paraguay, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Thailand and Ukraine.

It is my hope and expectation that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/55/L.92.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, France has become a sponsor.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.92?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 55/283).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 181?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 186

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Africa

Draft resolution (A/55/L.84/Rev.1)

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/55/L.84/Rev.1.

Mr. Abreha (Ethiopia): Ethiopia would like to be included as a sponsor of the draft resolution.

The President: I should like to announce that since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Belarus, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Monaco, Morocco, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United States and Yugoslavia.

The Assembly will now take a decision of draft resolution A/55/L.84/Rev.1.

Ms. Lajous (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Mexico believes that this is an opportune time for the General Assembly to consider the problem of malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa, as a response to the just call made at the African summit meeting held in Abuja in April 2000 and, in so doing, to promote national, regional and international efforts to combat malaria, a disease that stands in the way of development and poverty alleviation in developing countries. Malaria exists in various regions of the world, but 90 per cent of cases are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite the strong negative impact that malaria has had in a number of countries, the problem can be remedied, as Mexico's experience proves. The solution is to be found in simultaneous public health efforts at the regional level. Combating malaria is a task that must be undertaken jointly. The African countries have committed themselves to promoting community participation in activities to roll back malaria; to ensuring that diagnostic services and treatment, including treatment at home, are accessible to the population; and to increasing their vigilance in order to overcome the resurgence of malaria in controlled areas.

For its part, the international community must allocate substantial resources to assist in rolling back malaria; invest in the development of vaccines against

malaria and provide incentives for other anti-malaria technologies; strengthen and finance the work of research institutions and ensure the participation of international specialists; and promote the cooperation of research institutions with the agencies that are implementing the malaria roll-back initiative so as to ensure that full use is made of scientific knowledge and experience gained from other programmes.

Mexico has established a Centre for Research on Malaria within the National Institute of Public Health. We have more than 20 years of experience and global recognition in basic and functional research on malaria. Our research has led to the development of new strategies for the control of vectors and the control of the transmission of parasites, as well as for ensuring epidemiological vigilance with regard to the disease. Through the use of such strategies, we have achieved levels of control never before attained, with the advantage of reducing the use of insecticides, eliminating DDT in such activities and promoting community participation in the control, treatment and prevention of the disease.

Mexico would like to make available the expertise and experience of the Centre to assist in the transfer of technology and provide practical treatment in the field, as well as courses specially designed for individuals involved in controlling malaria and programmes, at the masters and doctorate levels within the Institute, for scientific personnel from African countries. We have already done this for Central American countries.

The Government of Mexico supports the call of the General Assembly to declare 2001-2010 the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa. We believe that this will give impetus to activities that have already been undertaken by developing countries to ensure that we roll back this disease in various regions of the world, particularly Africa.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.84/Rev.1, entitled "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.84/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/55/L.84/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 55/284).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 186?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 61 (*continued*) **and agenda item 62**

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Draft resolution A/55/L.93

The President: As members will recall, I appointed His Excellency Mr. Valdés of Chile as the facilitator for the informal consultations on the revitalization of the General Assembly and improving the efficiency of the General Assembly. As a result of his able assistance, today the Assembly has before it the draft resolution. I would like to take this opportunity to extend to Mr. Valdés, on behalf of the Assembly, our sincere appreciation for his contributions.

I now give the floor to Mr. Gabriel Valdés of Chile to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.93.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/55/L.93, the annex to which contains the outcome of the informal consultations on the improvement of the working methods of the General Assembly.

The consultation process, begun at the suggestion of President Holkeri, had as its starting point resolutions 47/233, 48/264 and, in particular, 51/241, all of which relate to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, with particular emphasis on the implementation of those provisions agreed upon in the resolutions referred to that have not yet resulted in any specific decisions. As a result, with regard to the agenda of the General Assembly, it is proposed that cooperation items be clustered and biennialized, and that certain substantive items, set out in part II.B of the annex, also be biennialized. At the same time, we need to state that these agreements in no way affect the right of any State to propose any item or issue for consideration by the Assembly, as established in the draft resolution submitted today.

In addition, it was decided to allocate to the Third Committee the consideration of the item on the World Summit for Social Development and the biennial treatment of some items referred to in item II.B of the annex.

Regarding the consideration of reports by the Assembly, progress was made on implementing the provisions of resolution 51/241, in particular those relating to the annual report of the Secretary-General.

Finally, the annex contains a few innovative proposals related to the General Committee, to the strengthening of the office of the President of the General Assembly, and to the use of information technology.

The resolution and the annex submitted today for approval by the General Assembly constitute one more step in the already extensive history of the effort to grant to the Assembly the central political role that it should have in the United Nations system. As such, they respond to one of the most heartfelt aspirations of the Member States: to restore to this democratic body par excellence, which allows for the participation of all its members in conditions of equality, the preponderance in international affairs which the drafters of the Charter envisaged for it. The various resolutions adopted by the Assembly in the past pursued the objective of strengthening the United Nations system.

Through the various processes of debates and agreements, including the establishment of a high-level open-ended working group, in recent years members have adopted resolutions — such as 47/233, 48/264, 49/252 and 51/241 — that propose, among other matters, improving the General Assembly's capacity to effectively manage its responsibilities and to fully comply with its mandate. In this way, emphasizing the character of the Assembly as the highest political body with universal representation within this Organization, the consideration of agenda items in plenary was reserved for questions or issues that are urgent or of great political importance. This requires reviewing the agenda and reducing its scope. Without this measure it will be difficult for the Assembly to be effective and to comply with the mandate established in the Charter. To this end, these resolutions authorize the President of the Assembly to evaluate the debates in the various bodies of the system and to carry out effective informal and open-ended consultations to consider, if deemed appropriate, the adoption of measures to make the role of the General Assembly more effective. As we know, the full implementation of these resolutions has not been possible.

In the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly, which is nearing its end, it has been thanks to the initiative and personal energy of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Harri Holkeri, that we have been able to respond to these issues in the debate among Member States. I am certain that I am expressing the views in this Hall in saying that all Member States without exception are thankful to him for his personal leadership, devotion and political commitment, as well as for the transparency of the process of consultation which led to this resolution. Allow me, on my own behalf, to express my gratitude for the confidence that the President placed in me in seeking my assistance in this facilitation process, which has led to this new step in the revitalization of the General Assembly.

During our consultations I noted the unanimous agreement of Member States regarding the need to adopt for the General Assembly's work to the demands of today's world, to give greater relevance to urgent political discussions, and to reduce an agenda that dilutes the impact of the Assembly's decisions and discussions and makes it very difficult for the smallest delegations to follow and participate on an equal footing. I am grateful for the cooperation and interest shown by all delegations in the development of the consultation process. We have all noted during these discussions that difficulties arise regarding adapting the agenda and the need to respect the legitimate aspirations of Member States to preserve the items which are of preferential interest to them. Also, we noted the need to continue making progress in this area, and the general agreement to do so.

These efforts have brought limited results, but the open debate we have had together enables us to visualize other initiatives to revitalize the Assembly and increase the relevance of its debates, not only for the system, but also for the development of the international community.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

To begin with, we would like to thank you and Ambassador Valdés for all your efforts to ensure that we get a resolution on the revitalization of the General Assembly and improving its efficiency, to be found in document A/55/L.93. We welcome the results achieved and are glad that it will still be possible to adopt this resolution under your presidency in the fifty-fifth session. We hope that there will be no delay in the implementation of its provisions. The search for more effective working methods for the Assembly remains a concern for the European Union, and that is why it is our fervent wish that this exercise will be continued at the forthcoming session.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/55/L.93. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen Jian: Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/55/L.93, paragraphs 22, 23 and 24 of the annex thereto call for a number of measures for strengthening the office of the President of the General Assembly and for enhancing the use of modern technology in the intergovernmental processes of the Organization.

As regards strengthening the office of the President of the General Assembly specified in paragraph 22 of the annex to the draft resolution, the additional measures for its strengthening would be identified in consultations with the office of the President. The impact of those measures on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 would be assessed on the basis of the experience of the current biennium and taking into account the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the issue contained in its report of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/7) and reported to the Assembly during the main part of its fifty-sixth session, as requested by the Assembly in paragraph 22 of the Annex to the draft resolution. On that understanding, the proposals contained in paragraph 22 of the annex to the draft resolution would have no programme budget implications on the programme budget of the biennium 2000-2001.

As regards the need to enhance the use of modern technology and information within the United Nations, including in the intergovernmental processes of the Organization, the scope of the proposals for such enhancing, as detailed in paragraph 24 of the annex to the draft resolution, requires specific evaluation to estimate the related requirements. Such evaluation would be undertaken by the Secretariat during the rest of the year 2001. The results of the evaluation and the related requirements would be reported to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session in accordance with established procedure. On that understanding, the proposals contained in paragraphs 23 and 24 of the annex to draft resolution A/55/L.93 would have no programme budget implications on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on A/55/L.93, entitled "Revitalization of the General Assembly; improving the efficiency of the General Assembly". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 55/285).

Mr. Vámos-Goldman (Canada): My delegation first wishes to congratulate the facilitators for their very hard work and for this draft resolution which we have just adopted. Canada strongly supports the resolution and the efforts to improve the efficiency of the General Assembly. A number of steps, including the biennialization of items will, we hope, lead us firmly in this direction. My delegation would like to note that certain items — for example, the situation in Haiti — while biennialized in this exercise, may have to be revisited in subsequent sessions, should the situation warrant.

Canada would like to emphasize that we supported the biennialization of this item in spite of this possibility because we feel strongly about the need to improve the efficiency of the General Assembly. We would urge other delegations positively to consider this course of action in future exercises to improve the work of the Assembly, that is, to allow items to be biennialized for the sake of efficiency, secure in the knowledge that should the situation warrant, the item can be reintroduced in the following session.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 61 and 62?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 48

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

The President: Members will recall that on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 48.

Agenda item 63

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

The President: Members will recall that on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 63.

Agenda item 64

Question of Cyprus

The President: Members will recall that on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session but deferred a decision on the allocation of the item to an appropriate time during the session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly. May I take it, then, that is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 64.

Agenda item 86 (*continued*)

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/55/572/Add.1)

The President: In order to allow time for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee to consider the programme budget implications of the draft resolution contained in the report, it is necessary to forward this report to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I therefore take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to include in the draft agenda of its fifty-sixth session the item entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects"?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 86.

Agenda item 119

Improving the financial situation of the United Nations

The President: Members will recall that on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 119.

Agenda item 131

Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 131.

Agenda item 139

Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 139.

Agenda item 141

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 141.

Agenda item 142

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 142.

Agenda item 145

Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 145.

Agenda item 146

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 146.

Agenda item 147

Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 147.

Agenda item 149

Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and the Civilian Police Support Group

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 149.

Agenda item 151

Financing of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude consideration of agenda item 151?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 178

Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: Members will recall that, on 12 September 2000, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-sixth session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 178.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

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General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-fifth session

112th plenary meeting
Monday, 10 September 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 59 *(continued)*

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/55/47)

Draft decision (A/55/47, para. 34)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision contained in paragraph 34 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: I should like to express sincere thanks to Ambassador Thorsteinn Ingólfsson of Iceland and Ambassador John de Saram of Sri Lanka, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, who have so ably continued during this session to conduct the discussions of complex negotiations of the Working Group.

I am sure members of the Assembly join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 59?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items, on which action has been taken at previous meetings, have remained open for consideration during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly: items 10, 11, 12, 17, 20, 26, 32, 40 to 43, 45, 46, 50, 60, 73, 84, 94, 101, 112, 114 to 118, 120 to 130, 132 to 138, 140, 143, 144, 148, 150, 152, 153, 164, 166 to 169, 175, 176, 179, 182 and 185.

As members are aware, these items, with the exception of agenda item 118, entitled "Programme planning"; agenda item 120, entitled "Administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency"; agenda item 125, entitled "United Nations pension system"; item 166, entitled "Election of judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991"; agenda item 168, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999"; agenda item 169, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of

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the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations"; and agenda item 185, entitled "Election of judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994", have been included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of these items at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

Closing address by the President

The President: As the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly draws to a close, I feel deeply honoured and privileged to have served as its President. That this session was designated the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, and that it was launched by the largest-ever gathering of world leaders and included the adoption of the historic Millennium Declaration, made my task a particular challenge.

A year ago, I set prompt and effective follow-up to the Millennium Summit as one of the key priorities of my term. The Declaration was not to be left without attention worthy of its historic status. In December, the Assembly adopted a resolution outlining the follow-up action. Its emphasis was to call for maximum use of existing structures and upcoming conferences and events. For once, new mechanisms were not envisaged.

During the past months, the Declaration has helped set the agenda and outcome of a series of major conferences. From the Conference on the Least Developed Countries through the special sessions on Habitat and HIV/AIDS and the recent conferences on small arms and racism, the Declaration has provided an important backdrop. For my part, I have underlined to each and every conference the importance of the Summit follow-up. I have also advocated an integrated approach in that follow-up. Such an approach should also be reflected in the road-map document prepared by the Secretariat, which is to be issued imminently.

The United Nations is, however, still far from a truly integrated follow-up to the Summit. The same goes for the entire agenda of the last decade's global conferences, which is too often approached on a piecemeal basis. Unfortunately, both Member States and the respective entities of the Secretariat seem to be unable to break the habit of viewing and considering different issues in isolation. Proper focus is needed, but in the overall context of the global agenda.

To a great extent, the piecemeal approach results from lack of coordination. To improve coordination, my Office convened a series of meetings for representatives of the bureaux and secretariats of the various events so as to exchange information and help them learn from one another's experiences. Even then, one was not able to avoid reinventing the wheel on a number of issues. This was particularly clear on the issue of civil society participation, where the Organization would clearly benefit from the adoption of more uniform modalities for major conferences. Having been involved in preparations and discussions, as well as having chaired special sessions and participated in different conferences, it has become evident to me that the Organization needs uniform modalities on civil society participation in conferences, now that civil society participation is so much a part of the everyday life of the United Nations.

That brings me to the issue of civil society partnership — another theme that I have kept high on my agenda, in the spirit of the Millennium Declaration. I have advocated strengthened partnerships with civil society, including the private sector, for the Organization to be successful and relevant in the midst of the challenges of globalization. I would like to recognize the valuable work done by civil society, from the field to United Nations Headquarters, working towards the same universal goals as the Organization.

During my term, civil society took an active and visible part in the work of two special sessions of the General Assembly and of the three United Nations conferences. To help delegations make sense of the differing modalities for civil society participation in major conferences, my Office put together a compendium of past practices. I also acted as a patron for a highly productive symposium on the issue of civil society partnerships. Responding to numerous requests from Member States, I have asked that both the compendium and the synopsis of that symposium be issued as official documents of the General Assembly.

During the past year, I have attempted to gradually make the work of the General Assembly more effective and efficient. Many Members have come to know this through the small steps that I have taken. I have tried to be consistent and persistent, dispensing unhappiness in equal doses to all. However, the bigger issue is that the work of making the Assembly more relevant must be continued.

If we cannot reform its agenda and its working methods, the General Assembly will continue to fall short of its potential. The reform resolution adopted just a few days ago must be seen as only a beginning in that respect. In particular, the work of the plenary must be reinvigorated. Furthermore, Member States must show greater restraint in requesting the inclusion of new items on its agenda; otherwise, the work of the plenary will eventually become clogged, and the institution itself irrelevant. The Office of the President of the General Assembly will also have to be given resources and servicing commensurate with its role.

One of the observations that I made early on during my term was the lack of continuity from one presidency to the next. Even if the General Assembly secretariat provides services to the President, a core team of political officers — as called for by last Friday's resolution — will be needed. That will ensure substantive backstopping and continuity, as well as a much-needed basis for networking with substantive departments.

My attention was caught the other day by an advertisement which read, "Teamwork is spelled with two letters: W and E". An organization like the United Nations should be all about teamwork and about a sense of "we". There must be constant interaction between the Charter bodies, each one of them viewing the others as partners. I have had the good fortune of having a very good working relationship with the Secretary-General, and have pursued regular meetings with both the President of the Security Council and the President of the Economic and Social Council. This kind of interaction must be set on a well-established footing. In the spirit of dialogue and openness, I have also established the practice of holding regular monthly meetings with the chairpersons of the five regional groups to inform Member States about the work of the Assembly. To be self-sustaining, however, this kind of cooperation needs to include and have the full support of the Secretariat. I believe that an extra effort is needed within the Secretariat to this end.

Pursuing dialogue and openness has also meant full transparency and accessibility. My doors have been open almost 24 hours a day and I have benefited enormously from the advice and knowledge that representatives have given to me. Maybe now that the President's Office has been listed, at my request, in the United Nations phone directory — though only on page 243 — it will become even more accessible to Member States in the future.

In pursuing transparency, I have tried to make maximum use of my web site. In addition to my statements and messages, a summary of my daily activities has been promptly posted on the web site. Coming from a small, open society, whose success can in great part be attributed to its openness, I am a great believer in the positive-sum effects of maximum openness in any organization.

On the other reform issue, namely, that of the Security Council, I have tried to pursue comprehensive reform on different fronts. On day-to-day business, I have tried to enhance cooperation and coordination on common issues between the two Presidents through our monthly meetings. As President, I have also taken the step of addressing the Security Council on East Timor, a shared responsibility of both bodies. In the context of the Open-ended Working Group, as Chairman of that Group I have tried, together with my two able Vice-Chairpersons, to make progress in identifying the key aspects of the reform process.

As President of the Assembly, I have been mandated to follow up the implementation of the Summit Declaration, and I believe that the Declaration implied that there is a renewed willingness to move forward on the reform. I approached the ministers for foreign affairs of Member States for their help in exploring the best ways to fulfil the mandate of the Millennium Declaration to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

Based on the responses I have received from the ministers, I should like to make the following observations. All replies stressed the importance of Security Council reform, while recognizing its great sensitivity. In the light of the Summit outcome, many expressed their concern at the slow progress. There is a common recognition that the Council needs to reflect the realities of the twenty-first century to better serve the interests of peace and security.

The foreign ministers also, of course, drew attention to specific aspects which they considered of particular importance. The main question, however, is how to fulfil the Summit mandate and move forward, after eight years of discussion, to a stage of negotiation. The response I received in this respect was multifaceted. There is a general agreement that the Working Group has made some progress and has had an effect on the working methods of the Security Council. But the main issues of the reform are still open. Many ministers stressed that while the Working Group has worked well as an initial discussion forum, the time may have come to consider other avenues that would advance this process.

In this respect, three suggestions raised in the replies become critical. The first was the suggestion that discussion should be moved to a higher political level, be it a special session or high-level meeting, to enable us to generate sufficient political will to reach general agreement on this complex issue. The second suggestion was that while the goal must remain a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects, Governments may want to consider approaching this goal in a focused way and move forward step by step, as we have done in the context of General Assembly reform. In any organization, reform can never be final; it is a continuous process aiming to adapt to changing circumstances. Thirdly, the scope of reform as defined in the Working Group's agenda is gathering overwhelming support; hence, the question of the veto needs to be part of these discussions. Finally, all replies stressed that efforts for Security Council reform should continue.

To sustain the impetus of the Millennium Summit and to resolve the stalemate, I urge all Member States to engage more actively in this process in order to move from discussion to negotiation. It should have a high priority on the agenda of the United Nations and its Member States, if we are to maintain the United Nations as the main actor in the maintenance and restoration of international peace and security.

The elements are all discussed in the Open-ended Working Group, and the political will was demonstrated by the Millennium Declaration. We just have to bring them together. It is now up to the representatives of those very same Member States to turn that political will into reality and results. The United Nations cannot afford to fail in the reform of the Security Council.

The Millennium Declaration is a manifestation by world leaders of global consensus and a shared vision and shared responsibility for the future of humankind. Our responsibility is a key dimension of globalization that, in my opinion, has been too often overlooked. One of the most important millennium targets is to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty, on less than $1 a day, by the year 2015. Several other millennium targets are intertwined with poverty and underline its cross-sectoral nature.

To tackle poverty, we need to understand its multidimensional character and address all its root causes in a holistic manner. This cannot be left to markets and macroeconomics alone; neither should the speed of change force us to overemphasize the short-term objectives. Attaining the millennium targets and eradicating poverty require a long-term vision to build human capital and sustainable people-centred development in communities and societies.

The national Governments have the main responsibility for implementing the Declaration, but they cannot be left to handle this enormous task alone; the international community and the United Nations system must assist country-driven processes. In this regard, national and international policies and actions are mutually supportive. At all levels, people's needs should guide our policy-making and discussions.

The millennium agenda on peace and development presents a major policy challenge for both developed and developing countries. These goals are realistic and within our reach through partnership and cooperation. The global community has massive human, technical, technological and financial resources. Our awareness of the policies required is more advanced than ever. In this regard, the issue of development finance is critical and requires the participation of all ministers of finance in next year's conference. We need to put into effect our strong political will and commitment, as demonstrated by the heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit.

It is my hope that this commitment will also guide the discussion when issues related to Africa are considered during the next session. Having visited the African continent twice during my tenure, and as Chairperson of the open-ended working group on Africa, I feel a special responsibility for development in Africa.

Since its adoption, I considered last December's agreement on the new scale of assessments one of the highlights of the Assembly's work this session. On the part of several delegations, it required painstaking efforts and a unique sense of vision about what would be in the best interest of the Organization. It was to put the Organization on a sounder financial footing.

Lately, this optimism has become somewhat tempered. We are no longer sure whether the historic agreement will become reality in all its aspects. It would be catastrophic for the Organization if it were not. I therefore call on the largest contributor to act without delay in accordance with what was agreed upon, to which its Government has committed itself.

Other key issues on our agenda that we were able to consider successfully included the important report by the Brahimi Panel on peacekeeping, and the subsequent comprehensive review of peacekeeping. We have also launched consideration of the conflict prevention report in all relevant organs of the United Nations, as well as by civil society, and the Assembly will come back to this issue some time next year. The consideration of these reports has reflected a high degree of willingness by Member States to help maintain the relevance of the United Nations. I truly hope that a most important mandate of the Organization, the maintenance of international peace and security, will continue to be high on the agenda of Member States. The many promises made during the Millennium Summit must be kept so that the Organization can meet the challenges it is facing with added resources and improved planning and preparedness.

I wish to extend my sincerest gratitude to Member States for their constructive and pro-United Nations efforts during my term. Without their support, my agenda would have remained unfulfilled. I am convinced that this Organization remains, in the eyes of the vast majority of Member States, indispensable.

My thanks also go to all of you individually. Both at the professional and at the personal level, I have been privileged to have the support and friendship of some of the finest people in the diplomatic service.

I want to express my special thanks to the members of the General Committee, to the Chairpersons of the six Main Committees and to the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, many of whom have presided over the plenary meetings in my absence. I also wish to give special recognition to the Vice-Chairmen of the open-ended working groups, as well as to my facilitators on various issues, in particular, the revitalization of the General Assembly.

I also wish to extend my thanks to the Secretariat, from top to bottom. Mr. Secretary-General, you provide us with inspiration and encouragement and give a human face to this Organization. Your Deputy, whose position was created by the previous reform round, Ms. Fréchette, is indispensable to you in running this Organization, and she has shown great leadership even in difficult moments.

Among the Under-Secretaries-General, a special tribute goes to Mr. Jin Yongjiang, who retired just a few weeks ago and returned to his native China. He and all of his team lent me invaluable support during these past 12 months.

Finally, I wish to extend my very best wishes for success to my most esteemed successor, President designate of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Han Seung-soo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea. I have no doubt that he will make an excellent President of the Assembly. I wish him well, and I once again thank you all.

Agenda item 2 (*continued*)

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the fifty-fifth session

The President: I declare closed the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.